

To:  
 Dentists

## Dentists have more options to access recipient eligibility information

Wisconsin has significantly upgraded its Medicaid Eligibility Verification System (EVS) and incorporated new electronic technologies. More than ever before, these enhancements allow dentists to easily access the most current eligibility information, to cut down on paperwork, and to increase the accuracy of submitted claims.

Wisconsin Medicaid is making it easier to access the existing eligibility verification methods. Two of these methods, the AVR system and Provider Services, are available at no cost to dental offices.

### The Eligibility Verification System

Prior to this spring, dentists have relied primarily on paper Medicaid identification cards and, to a lesser extent, the telephone to verify recipient eligibility and insurance coverage. The development of the new Forward Medicaid recipient identification card has brought extensive expansion in the capacity and responsiveness of the current EVS.

Due to technological innovations, additional means of electronically verifying eligibility are available.

The EVS can be accessed by the following methods:

- **The AVR system** is a computerized service that allows providers with touch-tone telephones direct access to eligibility information. It has new, easy-to-follow prompts. It also offers information on claim status, prior authorization (PA), and provider

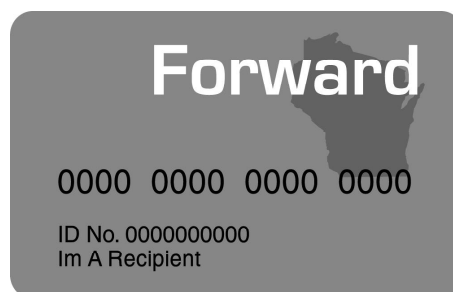
Checkwrite. Wisconsin Medicaid increased the number of telephone lines to assist with increased call volume.

You can complete up to eight eligibility inquiries to AVR per call.

The AVR system is available day and night, seven days a week, at (800) 947-3544 or (608) 221-4247.

- **Provider Services** staff help providers with questions specific to recipient eligibility. Wisconsin Medicaid expanded its staff and added more telephone lines to assist with increased call volume. Provider Service staff are available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and on Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call (800) 947-9627 or (608) 221-9883.

- **Magnetic stripe readers** look and work similarly to credit card terminals. Recipient information may be entered manually on a key pad or by passing the magnetic stripe on the back of the Forward recipient identification card through the reader. The Forward card will replace paper recipient identification cards. With the magnetic stripe reader and the Forward card, dentists can access current Medicaid



The Forward recipient identification card.

eligibility information within seconds. The magnetic stripe reader may be purchased through commercial eligibility verification vendors. A list of vendors is available in the February 1999 *Medicaid Update*, which can be found on the Medicaid web site at [www.dhfs.state.wi.us/Medicaid/updates/99/99-feb.htm](http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/Medicaid/updates/99/99-feb.htm).

- **Personal computer software** can be integrated into a provider's current computer system and, using a modem, can access the same information as magnetic stripe readers. The software may be purchased through the commercial eligibility verification vendors.
- The **Direct Information Access Line with Updates for Providers (Dial-Up)** system offers recipient information through the provider's personal computer or "dumb terminal" with the use of a software communications package and telephone modem. Providers may purchase this system from the Medicaid fiscal agent by calling (608) 221-4746.

### Other valuable information providers can access

All methods of verifying eligibility will ensure providers receive the most current information, including:

- Eligibility status for the date(s) of service requested.
- Other private health insurance and/or Medicare coverage.
- Managed care enrollment status.
- Recipient Lock-in (restrictions that require recipients to designate a dentist in response to recipient abuse of Medicaid privileges).

When a dentist makes inquiries regarding a recipient's Medicaid managed care plan or private health insurance, EVS will indicate if coverage includes dental services. If EVS

indicates that a recipient's Medicaid managed care plan does not provide dental coverage, bill Wisconsin Medicaid directly (fee-for-service), not the Medicaid managed care program.

### Benefits for dentists

Using EVS, dentists can verify eligibility and insurance information prior to providing services. The EVS ensures:

- More accurate information for claims submission.
- Decreased eligibility-related claims denials.
- Reduced insurance billing errors.

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### EVS HINTS

- ✓ *Use EVS in advance to verify eligibility for the next day's Medicaid appointments.*
  - ✓ *Complete up to eight inquiries with each AVR telephone call.*
  - ✓ *Schedule your office staff to use EVS during your least busy office hours.*
  - ✓ *Inform recipients prior to their appointments if their eligibility has expired.*
  - ✓ *Eliminate the need for eligibility verification while recipients are in the waiting room.*
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### Forward card timeline

- Medicaid will issue Forward cards to recipients in ten pilot counties in July 1999. The pilot counties include: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Rock, Sauk, and Walworth counties.
- Providers will be informed when Forward identification cards are to be implemented statewide.

There are many ways to access eligibility information. You can select the method that is most effective for you. You do not have to purchase any equipment to take advantage of the eligibility verification improvements, which include:

- Enhanced telephone capacity.
- New, valuable information through the AVR system.

The Wisconsin Medicaid Update is the first source for provider information including Medicaid policy and billing information.

Wisconsin Medicaid is administered by the Division of Health Care Financing, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, P.O. Box 309, Madison, WI 53701-0309.

For questions, call Provider Services at (800) 947-9627 or (608) 221-9883 or visit our web site at [www.dhfs.state.wi.us/medicaid](http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/medicaid).